

March 5, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to express my sincere opinion in regards to the ability and professionalism of Dr. Laurie A. Ramirez. I had the distinct pleasure of getting to know Dr. Ramirez as a student in her Advanced Topics in Diversity class, as a part of my Master's program in Middle Grades Education. When I first signed up for this required class, I honestly believed that I had nothing to gain from it. I was certain that I had little to no room for growth in being able to see diverse populations without prejudice or judgment. Dr. Ramirez showed me that there is always a great deal of room for growth. This growth carried beyond my role as an educator, and into my roles as a son, friend, father, and member of society at large.

The teachings of Dr. Ramirez were firmly based in current research, and were always applicable to the classroom. The project that she developed for this class provided an experience that was clearly new to most of the members of my cohort, and the scope of this project was comprehensive. From reflecting on our own experiences and identifying thought patterns of prejudice and stereotypes that came from the generations before us, to recognizing our sphere of influence and how wide reaching our words and actions can be, the project taught us all to be more mindful of how we interact with others. Finally, the culmination of the project forced each of us to step outside of our comfort zone and identify with the feelings of being a minority, experiencing what it feels like to be the one that sticks out like a sore thumb in a given situation.

One of my favorite things about Dr. Ramirez is that in spite of her credentials, she always seemed like Laurie in the classroom. There is familiarity and accessibility in her classroom that allows for free flow of discussion and an exchange of ideas that I have been party to in my lifetime very rarely. It would not be an overstatement to say that being a part of her class had a profound effect on the way that I view the world around me. She helps people to remember that we are all people, and we share some very basic and very important commonalities. It is the respect for the differences that makes the biggest difference.

Feeling that I have gotten so much out of these learning experiences has caused me to continue to correspond occasionally with Dr. Ramirez, and what I have discovered is that she is not just a top notch educator, but a quality researcher, and an all around decent individual. I recommend her class to others whenever I have the opportunity, and truly believe that she is one of those unique individuals that can have a positive effect on every person that she comes into contact with. I feel blessed to have had that opportunity, and credit Dr. Ramirez with many positive changes in my life stemming from the things that I learned studying under her.

Sincerely,

David A. Chapman